

The countries of Europe have created large, extensive welfare systems. They have outrageously high taxes. They tax and spend, all to support growing government social programs. And the result? In December 2003, Belgium had an 8.3 unemployment rate. In January 2004, France, a vocal critic of U.S. economic and foreign policy, had a whopping 9.3 percent unemployment rate. Germany, another consistent critic of the U.S., in January of this year had a 9.1 percent unemployment rate.

Mr. Speaker, in January of 2004 America had a 5.6 percent unemployment rate.

A leftist European model does not work in foreign affairs and it does not work here in economics. Unfortunately and unwisely, Democrats have adopted this kind of approach for their platform.

We have weathered a recession and September 11 with the \$1 trillion impact it had on our economy, and we remain committed to tax relief. And this month the Employer Outlook Survey reported that 28 percent of the 16,000 employers that they surveyed expected to hire more workers from April to June of this year.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BLUMENAUER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

"EXXON VALDEZ" IS NOT THE ONLY SHIP AGROUND

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, America will pause tomorrow to remember the 15th anniversary of the *Exxon Valdez* environmental disaster. On March 24, 1989, the captain in charge of this massive tanker was unfit to command even a row boat, yet the intoxicated captain was at the helm, and he ran the *Valdez* aground in Alaska's fragile and pristine Prince William Sound. Eleven million gallons of oil emptied into the sea and devastated everything in its path. It will take generations, if ever, for there to be a complete recovery.

Fifteen years later, at least 100 tons of toxic waste, concentrated by years of weathering, continues to kill and maim Alaska's environment. Fifteen years later, thousands of Alaskans continue to wait for the \$5 billion a jury ordered Exxon to pay. The money remains in Exxon's pocket. Exxon would rather buy time and influence than pay what amounted to 1 year of profits for an environmental catastrophe.

Sound familiar?

It should.

The President's proposed budget hemorrhages red ink about as fast as

the *Exxon Valdez* gushed oil into the Prince William Sound, and the consequences are just as devastating. This President has run the U.S. economy aground with the same disregard for protecting ordinary Americans as a drunken captain had one night for protecting Alaska's environment. It will take generations, if ever, for there to be a complete recovery.

Here is the damage report from the scene.

The President rewards our soldiers returning from Iraq by increasing fees for medical service in his budget. Welcome home, soldiers. Get out your checkbooks.

The administration orders universal health care for everyone in Iraq, but not America. Administration officials claim everyone in America already has health coverage. That will come as a surprise to 44 million Americans.

The person who knew the prescription drug bill would cost \$139 billion more than the administration said it would, he was told he would be fired if he released that data. If only Supreme Court Justice Scalia were a Member of the House, he might lead the Republicans in a great "Quack, Quack" when the drug bill passed on quack data.

Perhaps we should have heard a similar refrain when the administration decided that flipping hamburgers was a manufacturing job. Perhaps the President should have declared, "Quack, Quack" when the administration rewarded corporate buddies by throwing out the rule book for overtime pay for ordinary Americans.

The average American is a sitting duck for this administration.

Millions of Americans are drowning in a sea of unemployment, but the administration refuses to throw a lifeline by extending unemployment benefits.

Average Americans received an average cut of \$676. Millionaire Americans received an average cut of \$112,925. This must be an example of the compassion the President says motivates him every day.

Big oil gets invited to secret meetings conducted by the Vice President to map out a future energy policy for America. Somehow, I do not think they talked at all about the *Exxon Valdez* or the money Exxon owes the people of Alaska for their drunken sailor.

I could be wrong, but we may never know because the administration refuses to tell America what went on behind closed doors.

Speaking of doors, they are slamming shut on average Americans at an alarming rate. Interest rates are at a record low. Mortgage foreclosures, personal bankruptcy and credit card delinquencies are either rising or are at record highs.

I wonder if we will hear a "Quack, Quack" from the White House on that one? Probably not. Duck hunting, after all, is best done on private lands owned by oil companies with the Vice President leading a Supreme Court Justice who has elevated duck calls to a Supreme Court decision.

How much things change. How much they stay the same.

The *Exxon Valdez* ran aground when there was a President Bush in the White House. The U.S. economy ran aground when there was a President Bush in the White House. The *Exxon Valdez* caused the greatest environmental catastrophe in history when it ran aground. Our President Bush, Bush II, may trump that with the largest economic catastrophe in history when he ran America aground.

HONORING THE CONGRESSIONAL HISPANIC CONFERENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the first anniversary of the Congressional Hispanic Conference. Formed just 1 year ago, the Conference promotes the interest of over 40 million Americans of Hispanic and Portuguese descent. As an associate member of this Conference, along with our founding members, we have provided a needed voice in Congress and in issues important to the Hispanic and Latino community.

Hispanics, by principle, value moderate and conservative beliefs, and the Congressional Hispanic Conference's policy objectives mirror those beliefs.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly believe "Los valores le los Hispanos son los valores de los Republicanos," meaning "Hispanic values are Republican values."

When you address the issues, it is clear that the values of the Republican Party are the values of Hispanic and Latino Americans.

In the 108th Congress, the Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2003, known by most as the "Bush tax cut," was passed and signed by George W. Bush. This legislation lowered taxes for every American taxpayer, and now several million working Americans of low income benefit from a new lower tax bracket of 10 percent, allowing them to keep more of what they earned. But also note, these hard-working Americans in the lowest tax bracket receive the largest percentage reduction in their tax burden. In fact, 3 million low-income families no longer have to pay Federal income taxes.

Another benefit of the Bush tax cut to strengthen families is that we increased the child tax credit from \$600 to \$1,000 per child this year. An estimated 34 million families benefit from this provision to help them. And I would note that we also strengthen families and, particularly, the institution of marriage by eliminating the marriage tax penalty.

The Congressional Hispanic Conference is committed to passing legislation which provides common-sense lower taxes for all Americans.

With the No Child Left Behind Act designed to help our schools passed by this Congress, signed into law by President Bush, minority parents are empowered with the freedom to remove

their children from unsafe and failing schools and enroll them into a more successful institution. Ensuring that Hispanics receive a quality education will assist bridging the wage and unemployment gap that exists here in America.

□ 1945

We have all learned that with higher education workers can earn more income with their jobs; and I would also note, with our commitment to education in the Republican Congress, when we worked with the President over the last 3½ years, we have increased Federal funding for education by 45 percent over just 3 years ago.

Mr. Speaker, these are just two examples of numerous legislative accomplishments of the Congressional Hispanic Conference, along with the Republican majority. The list continues, whether the issue is the Republican effort to increase the number of community health centers and access to health care, to lower taxes to strengthen and make our schools better, to support faith-based community organizations, or promote homeownership and develop a common market for all of the Americas.

Republicans, under the leadership of the gentleman from Illinois (Speaker HASTERT) and President Bush have worked hard to make our messages of support clear to our Latino and Hispanic communities and neighbors.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to serve as an associate member of the Congressional Hispanic Conference and commend the conference for a successful year in just 1 year. My colleagues and I will continue to promote the goals and aspirations of the Latino community and the opportunities for all Americans.

Los valores de los Hispanos son los valores de los Republicanos. Compartimos los mismos valores. Somos todos Americanos.

(English translation of the above statement is as follows:)

Hispanic values are Republican values. We share common values. We are all Americans.

TELLING THE TRUTH, FACING THE CONSEQUENCES IN THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, Richard Clark is a career civil servant and registered Republican who served in four administrations: President Reagan, President Bush, President Clinton and now our present President Bush. Most recently, he served for this President as a counterterrorism czar for President George W. Bush.

Apparently, he committed an unforgivable sin on "60 Minutes" Sunday night. In his new book, "Against All

Enemies," Mr. Clark lays out a detailed, factual, substantive critique of the President Bush's failure to adequately address the threat of terrorism and specifically al Qaeda before September 11.

I worked in the Clinton White House. I worked with Dick Clark. We did not always agree on everything; but we never doubted his patriotism, and working for four Presidents, one Democrat and three Republicans, he was committed to this country and to his mission in serving it.

Let me give my colleagues a quote from that show: "I think the way he," that is, the President, "responded to al Qaeda, both before 9/11 by doing nothing, and by what he's done after 9/11 has made us less safe. Absolutely."

"He [President Bush] ignored terrorism for months, when maybe we could have done something to stop 9/11. Maybe. We'll never know."

What has been the consequence? He has been castigated since the newscast aired Sunday night. The White House has attacked him professionally and personally, going to the point of questioning the loyalty and integrity of a man who clearly was not in the business for politics.

But Dick Clark joins a long list of ex-administration officials who have one thing in common: they told the truth. They told the truth in the face of great political pressure and personal risk, knowing they would be attacked for what they said, and this is a long list of people that exited the administration.

This administration prides themselves on having all these MBAs. The first thing you do when you have an MBA is assess the people around you. They have either got the greatest amount of names that have ever been assembled or the greatest amount of truth tellers, but they cannot handle the truth there.

I do not understand how they have hired Richard Foster, current chief Medicare actuary, who wanted to tell the truth about the cost of the prescription drug. Paul O'Neill, former Secretary of Treasury, former chairman of ALCOA, he told the truth about what was happening to America's fiscal house. Joe Wilson, former U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria. Eric Shinseki, retired Army chief of staff. John DiIulio, former White House director of the faith-based initiatives. Anthony Zinni, retired Marine general and President Bush's envoy to the Mideast. Larry Lindsey, the President's former chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, and now Dick Clark. These people told the truth despite the pressure to otherwise tell the American people the facts. For these acts of simple honesty, they deserve to be called patriots rather than be cast aside and have their patriotism and their professionalism questioned.

Let us review the facts: Richard Foster, current chief Medicare actuary. The truth: the chief Medicare actuary, Richard Foster, revealed the real cost

of the Medicare bill was \$550 billion, not \$400 billion. Consequences: he was warned that the consequences for insubordination are extremely severe if he told the Congress and the American people the truth.

Bruce Buckheit, EPA director for air quality. Truth: Mr. Buckheit said the new mercury standards were written to benefit the administration's corporate friends and polluters. Consequences: five current EPA officials corroborated Buckheit's story, but according to the Los Angeles Times chose to remain anonymous for fear of retribution. Mr. Buckheit resigned in December. EPA Administrator Leavitt is now reexamining the mercury rule and may propose a more stringent one, but he had to leave.

Paul O'Neill, former Secretary of the Treasury. Truth: Secretary O'Neill described in his book, "The Price of Loyalty," that President Bush is distracted, incurious and makes decision on the economy and national security based on poor information or for political motives. He called President Bush "a blind man in a room full of deaf people." He criticized his tax cuts and his plan to invade Iraq since week one. He criticized the tax cuts because he said they would leave America fiscally unsound. We have \$3 trillion additional debt because of these tax cuts. Consequence: it took the White House less than 24 minutes after Mr. O'Neill's "60 Minutes" interview to launch an investigation into his use of "classified" documents and then they fired him. He was actually fired before that.

I will submit the rest of my text into the RECORD herewith.

Joseph C. Wilson—former U.S. Ambassador to Niger.

Truth: In a July 6, 2003, New York Times Op-Ed, Ambassador Wilson challenged the President's claim that Iraq tried to buy uranium ore from Africa. The White House later admitted he was correct and the President's claim shouldn't have appeared in the State of the Union address.

Consequence: According to government sources, Administration officials leaked the name of Ambassador Wilson's wife, an undercover CIA agent, to a journalist. A White House senior official admitted about the leak, "Clearly, it was meant purely and imply for revenge."

General Shinseki—retired Army Chief of Staff.

Truth: Army Chief of Staff General Eric Shinseki told Congress that occupying Iraq would require "several hundred thousand troops."

Consequence: Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz criticized his estimate as "wildly off the mark." Shinseki later resigned.

John DiIulio—former White House Director of Faith Based Initiatives.

Truth: "There is no precedent in any modern White House for what is going on in this one: a complete lack of a policy apparatus," DiIulio told Esquire in January 2003. "What you've got is everything—and I mean everything—being run by the political arm. It's the reign of the Mayberry Machiavellis."

Consequence: Under intense pressure from the White House, DiIulio apologized for his